DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 137 006 RC 009 784

AUTHOR	Coleman, A. Lee
TITLE	Quality of Life: How Community Leaders and Ordinary Residents Assess Various Aspects of Life in Four Kentucky Mountain Counties. Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Report, RS-45, August 1975.
INSTITUTION	Kentucky Univ., Lexington. Agricultural Experiment Station.; Kentucky Univ., Lexington. Dept. of Sociology.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	RS-45
PUB DATE	Aug 75
NOTE	28p.; Related documents include ED 106 026-030
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Churches; *Community Leaders; *Comparative Analysis; Employment Opportunities; *Heads of Households; Health Services; Income; Land Use; Law Enforcement; Local Government; Physical Environment; *Rural Population; Schools; *Social Indicators; Surveys; Welfare
IDENTIFIERS	*Kentucky; *Quality of Life

ABSTRACT

Data derived from parallel questioning of 1971 knowledgables and leaders (N=111) and a 1973 sample of household heads and homemakers (N=464) living in four rural Eastern Kentucky counties (Harlan, Perry, Whitley, and Wolfe) were used to assess both objective and subjective aspects of quality of life. The indicators employed were: income; job opportunities; agriculture and land use; transportation; public utilities; public schools; churches and religion; medical care and health services; welfare; county government; crime and law enforcement; physical environment; opportunities for special groups. Results indicated: knowledgables tended to be more favorable than the household sample in their assessments; both groups were highly favorable; the two groups gave equal assessments of the current quality of schools and improvements in wages and job opportunities, agriculture and land use, opportunities for Negroes, and churches and religion; fewer than half of both groups saw improvement in county government, local politics, crime/law enforcement, the physical environment, agriculture and land use, and churches and religious life; aspects of life quality rated favorably by less than 50% of the residents and by more than 50% of the knowledgables were: quality of law enforcement and improvements in job opportunities, real income. recreational opportunities, and opportunities for old people. It was concluded that subjective indicators have some validity. (JC)

Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

RECEIVED
SEP 12 1975
NMSU
E.R.I.C.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

HOW COMMUNITY LEADERS AND ORDINARY RESIDENTS ASSESS VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LIFE IN FOUR KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN COUNTIES

by A. Lee Coleman

Department of Sociology
University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture
Agricultural Experiment Station
Lexington, Kentucky

RS-45

August, 1975

RC009784

QUALITY OF LIFE: HOW COMMUNITY LEADERS AND ORDINARY RESIDENTS ASSESS VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LIFE IN FOUR KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN COUNTIES

by A. Lee Coleman

What is Quality of Life and How Is It Measured?

Quality of life is a newly popular term for an old concept--the degree of people's happiness, comfort, satisfaction, and general level of living. Argument over how best to measure it is probably as old as the concept itself and has not diminished with its renaming.

Does the poor but happy man have a higher quality of life than the rich and unhappy one? Does the person who does not have to worry about food and shelter and who has most of the amenities that we associate with "modern civilization" automatically have a better quality of life than one who does not? By what measures can one community or area be compared with another as to quality of life?

If quality of life is material things such as income, housing, "conveniences," schools, public services, a "clean" environment, physical health and longevity, then communities and areas can be compared by counting and rating these objective conditions, for which data are often available from the United States Census and other statistical sources. This method has been used in several widely publicized studies of recent years. But if quality of life is essentially a subjective assessment or the feeling of well-being that individuals have, then measures of attitudes, based on direct questioning and observation of the people in an area are most appropriate. Objective conditions might be only loosely, if at all, related to how people feel about their living situation compared with those of other people and other communities.

In the present study both objective and subjective indicators were used. This report focuses on the subjective assessments. However, subjective assessments were obtained from two sets of respondents in each county--a selected group of 20 to 40 community leaders and "knowledgeables" and a cross-section sample of household heads and homemakers. The former included the heads of county and town governments, school officials, other strategically placed officials, and persons selected because they were in position to be especially knowledgeable about specific institutional areas (churches, health and medical care, agriculture, jobs and economy, etc.) Both

groups of respondents were asked the same or similar questions, and those in the household sample were asked some additional ones. This report is based only on the questions asked both groups.

Where the "knowledgeables" and the household sample differ in their assessments, as they do in a good many instances, the question arises as to whose assessment or perception is most correct. The reader will have to make his own judgment on this or may decide that this issue is unimportant. It should be pointed out that the leaders and knowledgeables perhaps have more of a "stake" in a favorable assessment, since many have specific responsibilities for the quality of services. But this also gives them access to facts and comparative data that ordinary citizens don't have. On the other hand, the respondents in the cross-section sample are in a better position to know the services and conditions as experienced in their part of the county or as they affect persons of their socio-economic class. And it could also be argued that the perceptions and assessments of the ordinary residents are the most important, since they are the ultimate "consumers" or receivers of services, they are far more numerous than the leaders and knowledgeables, and they are "the people" whose collective perceptions and opinions should outweigh those of the leaders.

Data Source

The data for this report are from interviews with the knowledgeables and leaders in 1971, and from parallel questioning of the sample of household heads and homemakers in 1973. Previously issued reports based on the same surveys are RS-34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 (Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky). A forthcoming report is RS-46.

The four study counties are Harlan, Perry, Whitley, and Wolfe, all in the Eastern Kentucky mountains. Two of the counties, Harlan and Perry, are deep in Appalachia and rely heavily on coal mining for employment and income. Most of the people of these counties live in the three towns of 3,000 to 6,000 population (Hazard, Harlan, and Cumberland) or in smaller villages and coal camps. There is very little agriculture or industrial employment. The other two counties, Whitley and Wolfe, are nearer the Appalachian fringe and have considerable agriculture and relatively little mining. Whitley County has one town of 12,000 (Corbin) and another of 4,000 population (Williamsburg), whereas Wolfe County is completely rural, with Campton, its county seat, having

fewer than 500 persons. In recent years Whitley County has developed substantial industrial employment, and many people in Wolfe County have been commuting to industrial jobs in nearby towns. It should be noted that both phases of the survey were completed before the current boom in coal mining and recession in industrial employment.

These counties were originally selected as part of a Southern regional sample of low-income counties, based on objective indicators derived from 1950 Census data. Development-related research has been carried on in these counties since 1961. The current study was conducted in all of the counties of the regional sample, but this report is confined to the Kentucky data.

The leaders and knowledgeables interviewed in the four counties numbered 111, were predominantly male, and mostly lived in or near the towns. The household heads and homemakers numbered 464--320 in the open-country and small villages and 144 in the towns; 220 respondents were males and 244 females. Compared with people in the United States as a whole the household heads and homemakers were somewhat older (median age 54 years); were more likely to be unemployed, retired, or disabled; were much less well-educated; and had substantially lower incomes. In these characteristics they appear to be representative of Appalachian Kentucky and of low-income areas in the South.

Overall Assessments

The responses of knowledgeables and ordinary residents concerning the overall change in the quality of life in their counties and changes in their own family situation during the past decade (Table 1) have been presented and discussed in another report[1] and will only be briefly summarized here. Both groups viewed the changes over the past decade favorably. In every county and among both groups, 60 to 90 percent said the quality of life had improved "for most people" in their counties. The knowledgeables were somewhat more favorable than the residents, town people were more favorable than those in the country, and Whitley and Wolfe County respondents were more favorable than those in the coal counties.

---

[1]Coleman, A. Lee and Gabbard, Anne V., "Is the Quality of Life in the Kentucky Mountains Improving?" Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky, RS-39, January 1974.

Asked whether the situation of their own families had improved over the 10 years, fewer of both knowledgeables and residents said so than said that the quality of life had improved for most people. They did not think their situations had actually deteriorated, however; only 4 percent of the knowledgeables and 11 percent of the residents said this, and the remainder said their situations had remained the same (40 and 29 percent) or improved (56 and 60 percent). In contrast to the comparative assessments of the quality of life changes for most people, more of the residents than of the leaders thought their family situations improved. But more of the residents also thought their situations had worsened, while the knowledgeables tended to see no change if they did not see improvement. The residents varied little between counties in their assessments of their own situations, while the knowledgeables varied from only 28 percent in Perry County seeing improvement to 86 percent in Whitley County. Town residents were more likely to see improvement than were those in the smaller settlements and open country.

Assessments of Particular Institutions and Aspects of Life

Income - Asked whether the incomes of "people who work for wages" in their counties had improved or not in the past decade, about four out of five among both knowledgeables and residents said "yes" (Table 2). There was little difference between counties or between the two groups of residents.

But the knowledgeables were far more likely than the ordinary residents to say that the real income of people in their county had improved. Nearly three-fifths of the former as compared with only a fourth of the latter said there had been improvement when prices and buying power are taken into consideration. On the other hand, 44 percent of the residents said real income had decreased, while only 9 percent of the knowledgeables said this.

Almost no one in Wolfe County in either group of residents said that real income had decreased. Sixty percent of the residents in that county saw improvement, while no more than 25 percent in any other county did. In Harlan County, on the other hand, 55 percent said real income had worsened.

Job Opportunities - In their assessment of whether job opportunities had improved or worsened in the past 10 years (Table 2), there was a big difference between the highly optimistic perceptions of the Wolfe and Whitley County

TABLE 1--OPINIONS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR MOST PEOPLE IN THE COUNTY AND WHETHER THE SITUATION OF THE RESPONDENT"S OWN FAMILY HAD IMPROVED IN THE PAST 10 YEARS

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Has the quality of life for most people in the county improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	78	62	87	65	91	74	93	72	86	68
WORSE	9	19	3	20	0	12	0	16	4	17
SAME	13	19	10	15	9	14	7	12	10	15
TOTAL	100 (n=32)	100 (n=145)	100 (n=30)	100 (n=81)	100 (n=22)	100 (n=122)	100 (n=27)	100 (n=51)	100 (n=111)	100 (n=399)
Has your own family situation improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	66	66	28	60	86	55	44	57	56	60
WORSE	3	8	4	9	0	16	8	10	4	11
SAME	31	26	68	31	14	29	48	33	40	29
TOTAL	100 (n=32)	100 (n=145)	100 (n=25)	100 (n=81)	100 (n=22)	100 (n=123)	100 (n=25)	100 (n=51)	100 (n=104)	100 (n=400)

TABLE 2--OPINIONS ABOUT CHANGES IN INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Has the income of wage earners improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	78.1	75.2	80.8	75.7	90.5	85.4	88.9	83.0	84.0	79.5
WORSE	3.1	6.6	0.0	2.9	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	.9	3.5
SAME	18.8	18.2	19.2	21.4	9.5	12.9	11.1	17.0	15.1	17.0
TOTAL	100.0 (n=32)	100.0 (n=137)	100.0 (n=26)	100.0 (n=70)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=116)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=47)	100.0 (n=106)	100.0 (n=370)
Has real income (considering both wages and prices) improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	43.7	18.1	46.7	22.5	76.2	21.7	70.4	60.4	57.3	25.5
WORSE	15.6	55.1	13.3	46.5	0.0	46.6	3.7	4.2	9.1	44.3
SAME	40.7	26.8	40.0	31.0	23.8	31.7	25.9	35.4	33.6	30.2
TOTAL	100.0 (n=32)	100.0 (n=138)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=71)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=120)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=48)	100.0 (n=110)	100.0 (n=377)
Have job opportunities for county residents improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	21.9	25.5	32.1	31.5	100.0	73.1	85.2	65.3	54.7	46.6
WORSE	53.1	44.0	39.3	26.0	0.0	9.2	3.7	2.0	27.4	24.3
SAME	25.0	30.5	28.6	42.5	0.0	17.7	11.1	32.7	17.9	29.1
TOTAL	100.0 (n=32)	100.0 (n=141)	100.0 (n=28)	100.0 (n=73)	100.0 (n=19)	100.0 (n=119)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=49)	100.0 (n=106)	100.0 (n=382)

respondents and the pessimistic views in the mining counties, especially Harlan. Almost none of the knowledgeables and very few of the residents in Wolfe and Whitley said job opportunities had worsened, while about half of both groups in Harlan said this. More knowledgeables than ordinary residents in these counties said the situation was worse. In Whitley and Wolfe, where nearly everyone perceived the situation favorably, the knowledgeables were more unanimously favorable than the others.

Agriculture and Land Use - As to whether the agriculture and land-use situation in their counties had improved (Table 3), both groups of respondents in Whitley and Wolfe counties generally saw improvement, while very few of either group in the two coal counties saw improvement. In each of the latter counties half of the ordinary residents said the situation was worse than 10 years earlier, while the knowledgeables tended to say it had remained the same.

The range in the proportion saying the situation had improved was from 83 percent of the knowledgeables in Whitley County to 0 percent of the knowledgeables in Perry. In Wolfe County 67 percent of the residents saw improvement, as contrasted with 18 percent of those in Harlan. In Whitley and Wolfe Counties only 23 and 8 percent, respectively, said the situation was worse, as compared with half of the household sample in the coal counties.

The difference between reactions in the two sets of counties is not surprising, since Harlan and Perry have never had much agriculture and have long been coal-dominated, while Whitley and Wolfe have always had a substantial agricultural base and only recently have many of their people had non-agricultural jobs. Apparently in the coal counties the knowledgeables are more aware of the long-standing lack of agriculture, while the residents may have a more glamourized view of the past in agriculture and land-use. In Whitley, where nearly a quarter of the residents said things were worse, some may be reacting to the abandonment of farming for industrial jobs rather than to the quality of farming done by those remaining in farming.

Transportation - Both groups were highly favorable in their perception of the changes in roads and transportation (Table 3). The knowledgeables were overwhelmingly so, with 94 percent seeing improvement as compared with 72 percent of the ordinary residents. The generally very favorable perception was true of all counties, but in the two coal counties, Harlan and Perry, almost a third of the ordinary people said the transportation situation was the same or worse.

Public Utilities - Both knowledgeables and ordinary residents were highly favorable in their assessments of recent changes regarding utilities, with 92 percent of the former and 79 percent of the latter saying there had been improvement (Table 3). In all counties except Wolfe the knowledgeables were the most favorable. Almost no one in any of the counties said the utilities situation was worse.

Public Schools - About 9 out of 10 knowledgeables said the public schools of their county had improved and more than three-fourths of the ordinary residents said so (Table 4). The range by county was from 83 to 100 percent of the knowledgeables seeing improvement and from 68 to 84 percent of the household sample. Thus, both groups were highly optimistic about the direction of change in recent years, as they perceive it. Very few saw the schools as worse now than 10 years ago. The highest percentage saying "worse" was 18 percent of the household sample in Harlan County. The knowledgeables were more favorable than the ordinary residents in all counties except Perry, where the two groups were about equally favorable.

In their assessments of the current quality of the schools both knowledgeables and residents were about equally favorable. About 3 in 10 said the schools were "very good," and an additional 5 in 10 in each group said they were "pretty good." Only negligible proportions said they were "poor." In Perry County the ordinary residents gave a somewhat more favorable assessment than the knowledgeables.

Churches and Religion - Relatively few of either group saw improvement in the situation as to churches and religion in their counties (Table 4), though the ordinary residents were a little more likely than the knowledgeables to say there had been improvement. Half of the knowledgeables and 4 out of 10 of the residents said things in this area had remained the same, while 1 in 10 in each group said things were worse. There was considerable variation between counties in the assessments of the churches and religion situation, with only 14 percent of the Perry County knowledgeables but 47 percent of the residents seeing improvement, as compared with 75 percent and 48 percent, respectively, in Whitley County.

Medical Care and Health Services - Substantial majorities of both groups perceived improvement in this area in the last 10 years (Table 5), but the knowledgeables, with 93 percent seeing improvement, were considerably more unanimous than the residents, with 63 percent. The knowledgeables were highly favorable in all counties but only in Harlan County was this true of the ordinary residents, though slight majorities of

TABLE 3--OPINIONS ABOUT CHANGES IN THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION, AND THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Have public utility services improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	93.1	69.2	83.3	74.7	100.0	87.6	92.6	93.9	91.6	79.1
WORSE	0.0	5.6	0.0	1.3	0.0	5.8	3.7	0.0	.9	4.1
SAME	6.9	25.2	16.7	24.0	0.0	6.6	3.7	6.1	7.5	16.8
TOTAL	100.0 (n=29)	100.0 (n=143)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=19.3)	100.0 (n=20)	100.0 (n=121)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=49)	100.0 (n=106)	100.0 (n=388)
Has the quality of the roads and transportation system improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	81.3	65.7	96.7	62.9	100.0	80.4	100.0	86.5	93.6	72.4
WORSE	3.1	19.9	3.3	25.6	0.0	13.9	0.0	5.8	1.8	17.3
SAME	15.6	14.4	0.0	11.5	0.0	5.7	0.0	7.7	4.6	10.3
TOTAL	100.0 (n=32)	100.0 (n=146)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=78)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=122)	100.0 (n=26)	100.0 (n=52)	100.0 (n=109)	100.0 (n=398)
Has the situation with regard to agriculture and land use improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	21.4	17.9	0.0	19.4	83.3	59.4	52.0	66.7	34.3	39.1
WORSE	17.9	49.1	32.1	51.6	5.6	22.7	12.0	8.3	18.2	34.8
SAME	60.7	33.0	67.9	29.0	11.1	17.9	36.0	25.0	47.5	26.1
TOTAL	100.0 (n=28)	100.0 (n=106)	100.0 (n=28)	100.0 (n=62)	100.0 (n=18)	100.0 (n=106)	100.0 (n=25)	100.0 (n=48)	100.0 (n=99)	100.0 (n=322)

TABLE 4—OPINIONS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES AND RELIGION

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Have the public schools in the county improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	84.8	68.4	83.3	87.8	90.9	83.5	100.0	71.4	89.3	77.3
WORSE	6.1	17.6	10.0	8.1	0.0	10.7	0.0	2.1	4.5	11.6
SAME	9.1	14.0	6.7	4.1	9.1	5.8	0.0	26.5	6.2	11.1
TOTAL	100.0 (n=33)	100.0 (n=136)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=74)	100.0 (n=22)	100.0 (n=121)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=49)	100.0 (n=112)	100.0 (n=380)
How would you rate the present quality of public schools in the county?										
VERY GOOD	40.6	41.9	25.0	32.0	27.8	14.5	22.2	30.0	23.5	29.9
PRETTY GOOD	40.6	27.9	46.4	52.0	44.4	64.1	70.4	56.0	50.5	47.6
ONLY FAIR	12.5	16.2	25.0	13.3	27.8	16.3	7.4	14.0	17.1	15.3
POOR	6.3	14.0	3.6	2.7	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	2.9	7.2
TOTAL	100.0 (n=32)	100.0 (n=136)	100.0 (n=28)	100.0 (n=75)	100.0 (n=18)	100.0 (n=117)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=50)	100.0 (n=105)	100.0 (n=378)
Has the quality of churches and religion in the county improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	50.0	45.3	14.3	47.2	75.0	48.2	23.1	23.2	38.2	44.1
WORSE	17.9	11.5	10.7	9.7	5.0	21.6	7.7	4.7	10.8	13.5
SAME	32.1	43.2	75.0	43.1	20.0	30.2	69.2	72.1	51.0	42.4
TOTAL	100.0 (n=28)	100.0 (n=139)	100.0 (n=28)	100.0 (n=72)	100.0 (n=20)	100.0 (n=116)	100.0 (n=26)	100.0 (n=43)	100.0 (n=102)	100.0 (n=356)

the resident sample in all counties saw improvement. Harlan County, of course, is the site of a major unit in the Appalachian Regional Hospitals chain. Perry County also has an Appalachian Hospital, but the household sample in this county was no more favorable than those of the other two counties.

In the assessment of the current quality of health services Harlan County again stands out from the other three counties, with more than half of both knowledgeables and other residents saying they were "very good." In the four counties as a whole, about a quarter of each group gave this assessment. In all counties except Harlan, 20 percent or more of the residents said medical care was "poor." In Perry County only 10 percent of the residents considered such services "very good," and more than half classed them as "only fair" or "poor." In general, the knowledgeables and ordinary people did not differ a great deal in their perception of health services adequacy.

Welfare - Substantial majorities of both groups said the welfare situation in their county had improved (Table 5) but the knowledgeables were considerably more unanimous in this. In every county more knowledgeables saw improvement. In Harlan County about 20 percent of both groups said the welfare situation had worsened.

The question about whether the welfare situation had improved or gotten worse permitted the assessment that "the situation has gotten worse because too many people are on welfare or people are being encouraged in dependency," an attitude that might have been expected of some respondents, particularly the establishment-oriented knowledgeables. But the distribution of responses does not suggest that many people thought or answered in this way.

On a related question about whether the quality of life of poor people had improved over the decade, both groups of respondents were highly favorable, the knowledgeables being a little more so. The percentages saying "improved" ranged from 65 to 96 among the two groups in the four counties. Very few in either group or in any county said it was worse.

County Government - In contrast to schools, health services and welfare, areas in which the federal and state governments have had a large role, relatively few of either knowledgeables or residents saw improvement in their county government (Table 6). Half or more of each saw no change, 44 percent of knowledgeables and 32 percent of residents saw improvement, and 1 percent of knowledgeables but 18 percent of residents said it has gotten worse. Clearly then, the residents are more pessimistic than the knowledgeables in their assessment.

TABLE 5--OPINIONS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES, WELFARE, AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR POOR PEOPLE

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Has the quality of medical care and health services improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	90.9	78.6	93.3	53.8	90.4	53.3	96.3	53.2	92.8	62.9
WORSE	0.0	11.7	0.0	21.8	4.8	25.8	0.0	14.9	.9	18.5
SAME	9.1	9.7	6.7	24.4	4.8	20.8	3.7	31.9	6.3	18.7
TOTAL	100.0 (n=33)	100.0 (n=145)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=78)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=120)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=47)	100.0 (n=111)	100.0 (n=390)
How would you rate the present quality of medical care and health services?										
VERY GOOD	51.6	52.8	17.2	10.2	25.0	11.5	18.5	14.6	28.0	26.7
PRETTY GOOD	41.9	23.6	34.5	35.4	20.0	39.3	59.3	39.6	41.1	32.8
ONLY FAIR	6.5	13.2	41.4	27.8	40.0	28.7	22.2	25.0	26.2	22.4
POOR	0.0	10.4	6.9	26.6	15.0	20.5	0.0	20.8	4.7	18.1
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=144)	100.0 (n=29)	100.0 (n=79)	100.0 (n=20)	100.0 (n=122)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=48)	100.0 (n=107)	100.0 (n=393)
Have welfare programs improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	77.4	64.1	75.9	64.6	90.0	57.4	96.3	69.8	84.1	62.9
WORSE	19.4	19.2	17.2	16.9	0.0	17.8	0.0	2.3	10.3	16.1
SAME	3.2	16.7	6.9	18.5	10.0	24.8	3.7	27.9	5.6	21.0
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=120)	100.0 (n=29)	100.0 (n=65)	100.0 (n=20)	100.0 (n=101)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=43)	100.0 (n=107)	100.0 (n=329)
Has the quality of life for poor people improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	79.3	64.5	75.9	78.9	90.0	82.0	96.3	83.0	84.7	75.1
WORSE	6.9	9.4	17.2	5.6	0.0	4.9	0.0	2.1	6.7	6.3
SAME	13.8	26.1	6.9	15.5	10.0	13.1	3.7	14.9	8.6	18.6
TOTAL	100.0 (n=29)	100.0 (n=138)	100.0 (n=29)	100.0 (n=71)	100.0 (n=20)	100.0 (n=122)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=47)	100.0 (n=105)	100.0 (n=378)

In all counties except Wolfe more of both groups saw improvement than said things had gotten worse--though the most frequent answer for both groups in three of the four counties was that things have remained the same. Whitley County stands out as most favorably perceived, with 57 percent of the knowledgeables and 44 percent of the residents seeing improvement in their county government. Wolfe County's government is perceived least favorably, with large majorities saying things were the same or worse. Only one knowledgeable out of 111 in the four counties said his county government was worse.

The perceptions of political parties and county politics were similar to those of county government, though even more negative. Only 28 percent of knowledgeables and 16 percent of the household sample said there had been improvement. Whitley County politics were perceived as most improved and Wolfe's as least so, but in Whitley the two groups differed greatly, with the ordinary residents rather pessimistic as to the trend.

Crime and Law Enforcement - In this area of governmental activity, also, the assessments were generally unfavorable, with only 44 percent of the knowledgeables and 27 percent of the residents seeing improvement (Table 6). About 40 percent of each group said things had remained the same, while 1 in 3 of the residents but only 1 in 7 of the knowledgeables said the situation had worsened. In every county as many or more of the ordinary people said things were worse than said they were better, while in all counties but Perry very few knowledgeables thought things worse. Whitley County had the highest proportions saying things had improved.

In rating the current state of crime and law enforcement, the ordinary residents were still more unfavorable. While about three-fourths of the knowledgeables thought the law enforcement situation "very good" or "pretty good," only a third of the residents thought this and two-thirds thought it "only fair" or "poor." In Whitley County almost all of the knowledgeables said the situation was "very good" or "pretty good," but in every county big majorities of the residents thought it "only fair" or "poor." In Wolfe County 80 percent said this and fully half said "poor."

Recreation - Knowledgeables and residents were fairly close together in their assessment of whether recreation opportunities had improved in their counties (Table 7); a little more than half of the knowledgeables and a little less than half of the residents said there had been improvement.

TABLE 6--OPINIONS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Has the quality of county government improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	42.5	28.6	46.7	26.3	66.7	44.1	25.9	17.1	44.1	31.6
WORSE	3.0	14.3	0.0	22.8	0.0	15.7	0.0	26.8	.9	17.9
SAME	54.5	57.1	53.3	50.9	33.3	40.2	74.1	56.1	55.0	50.5
TOTAL	100.0 (n=33)	100.0 (n=119)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=57)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=102)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=41)	100.0 (n=111)	100.0 (n=319)
Has the quality of politics in the county improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	35.5	18.9	13.3	11.1	60.0	19.2	11.5	7.9	28.0	16.3
WORSE	0.0	16.2	3.3	25.7	0.0	24.0	3.8	23.7	1.9	22.8
SAME	64.5	64.9	83.4	55.6	40.0	56.8	84.1	68.4	70.1	60.9
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=111)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=54)	100.0 (n=20)	100.0 (n=104)	100.0 (n=26)	100.0 (n=38)	100.0 (n=107)	100.0 (n=307)
Has the crime and law enforcement situation in the county improved or gotten worse?										
IMPROVED	38.7	18.9	36.7	33.3	57.2	34.8	48.2	22.4	44.0	26.9
WORSE	9.7	38.5	33.3	31.9	4.7	33.9	7.4	22.4	14.7	33.8
SAME	51.6	42.6	30.0	34.8	38.1	31.3	44.4	55.2	41.3	39.3
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=143)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=72)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=115)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=49)	100.0 (n=109)	100.0 (n=379)
How would rate the county's present crime and law enforcement situation?										
VERY GOOD	22.6	4.2	44.5	6.9	63.2	3.5	15.4	0.0	34.0	4.0
PRETTY GOOD	29.0	24.5	33.3	26.4	31.5	40.0	65.4	20.4	39.8	29.0
ONLY FAIR	38.7	34.2	11.1	30.6	5.3	33.9	15.4	30.6	19.4	33.0
POOR	9.7	37.1	11.1	36.1	0.0	22.6	3.8	49.0	6.8	34.0
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=143)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=72)	100.0 (n=19)	100.0 (n=115)	100.0 (n=26)	100.0 (n=49)	100.0 (n=103)	100.0 (n=379)

In all counties except Perry, the knowledgeables were the most favorable. Overall, Whitley County respondents were the most favorable, with 90 percent of the knowledgeables and 65 percent of the residents saying recreation had improved. Only in Harlan County did any appreciable proportion in either group say that things had gotten worse; 16 percent of the residents there said that.

Physical Environment - About a third each of residents and knowledgeables felt that the physical environment in their county had deteriorated over the past decade (Table 7), but most of both groups still rated it as "very good" or "pretty good." The knowledgeables, however, were much more likely than the ordinary residents to say the environment had improved and was currently "very good." More than 40 percent of the knowledgeables but only 15 percent of the residents gave the "very good" rating, while 20 percent of the residents and 8 percent of the knowledgeables said it was "poor." Most of the "poor" ratings were in the coal-mining counties; in Perry County even among the knowledgeables a third said the environment was "poor."

Opportunities for Special Groups - Asked whether the opportunities for young people, old people, and blacks had improved (Table 8), both groups less often saw improved opportunities for youth than for the other two groups. More than half of the knowledgeables thought the situation of all three groups had improved but among the residents as many as half thought so only in the case of blacks. More than two-thirds of both groups said the situation of Negroes had improved, but it should be remembered that most respondents were white. Since there are no Negroes in Wolfe County, this question was not asked there.

There was more difference between counties with regard to the perceived trends in opportunities for old people and youth than in the case of blacks. Only 23 percent of the Harlan County residents saw improvement for youths, as compared with 67 percent in Whitley County. Only 23 percent of the Wolfe residents compared with 64 percent of those in Whitley saw improvement for old peole. The perceptions of the knowledgeables were more uniformly favorable, with fewer intercounty differences.

Conclusions

There was a general tendency for the knowledgeables and leaders to be more favorable than the household sample in

TABLE 7--OPINIONS ABOUT RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE QUALITY OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Opinions	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Have recreational opportunities improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	58.1	40.8	36.7	42.6	90.5	65.2	59.3	26.3	58.8	47.5
WORSE	3.2	16.2	3.3	3.3	0.0	1.7	0.0	5.3	1.8	8.1
SAME	38.7	43.0	60.0	54.1	9.5	33.0	40.7	68.4	39.4	44.4
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=142)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=61)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=115)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=38)	100.0 (n=109)	100.0 (n=356)
Has the quality of the physical environment improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	35.5	21.5	13.3	14.7	57.2	22.8	55.6	26.1	38.5	21.3
WORSE	35.5	36.1	40.0	39.7	33.3	28.0	40.7	17.4	37.6	31.9
SAME	29.0	42.4	46.7	45.6	9.5	49.2	3.7	56.5	23.9	46.8
TOTAL	100.0 (n=31)	100.0 (n=144)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=68)	100.0 (n=21)	100.0 (n=118)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=46)	100.0 (n=109)	100.0 (n=376)
How would you rate the present quality of the physical environment?										
VERY GOOD	18.2	29.2	40.0	10.3	59.1	5.1	55.6	4.3	41.1	15.2
PRETTY GOOD	39.4	25.0	40.0	29.4	27.3	48.3	37.0	54.4	36.6	36.7
ONLY FAIR	21.2	21.5	16.7	35.3	9.1	29.7	7.4	34.8	14.3	28.2
POOR	21.2	24.3	3.3	25.0	4.5	16.9	0.0	6.5	8.0	19.9
TOTAL	100.0 (n=33)	100.0 (n=144)	100.0 (n=30)	100.0 (n=68)	100.0 (n=22)	100.0 (n=118)	100.0 (n=27)	100.0 (n=46)	100.0 (n=112)	100.0 (n=376)

TABLE 8—OPINIONS ABOUT CHANGES IN THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUNG, THE OLD, AND NEGROES

Opinion	Harlan		Perry		Whitley		Wolfe		All	
	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents	Leaders	Residents
	percentages									
Have opportunities for young people improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	43.4	22.9	51.7	32.9	65.0	67.0	59.3	31.2	53.8	39.4
WORSE	23.3	36.4	6.9	13.2	0.0	11.3	0.0	4.4	8.5	20.2
SAME	33.3	40.7	41.4	53.9	35.0	21.7	40.7	64.4	37.7	40.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(n=30)	(n=140)	(n=29)	(n=76)	(n=20)	(n=115)	(n=27)	(n=45)	(n=106)	(n=376)
Have opportunities for old people improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	61.3	33.1	79.3	55.3	63.2	63.6	80.8	23.9	71.4	46.0
WORSE	0.0	16.2	0.0	9.2	10.5	11.6	3.8	2.2	2.9	11.7
SAME	38.7	50.7	20.7	35.5	26.3	24.8	15.4	73.9	25.7	42.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(n=31)	(n=142)	(n=29)	(n=76)	(n=19)	(n=121)	(n=26)	(n=46)	(n=105)	(n=385)
Have opportunities for Negroes improved or worsened?										
IMPROVED	74.2	63.2	64.3	68.3	66.7	78.3	-	-	68.8	68.2
WORSE	6.4	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	2.6	4.4
SAME	19.4	28.8	35.7	31.7	33.3	21.7	-	-	28.6	27.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0
	(n=31)	(n=125)	(n=28)	(n=41)	(n=18)	(n=60)			(n=77)	(n=226)

- No information—question not asked because no blacks in the county.

their assessments of recent changes and current quality of life in their counties. But both groups were highly favorable, for the most part. It seems clear that the quality of life in these counties is rated better by the people who live there than on the basis of objective indicators such as relative income, education, and employment.

No aspect of life was rated less favorably by the knowledgeables than by the ordinary residents, but the two groups gave about equal assessments of the current quality of schools, the improvement in wages and job opportunities, the improvement in agriculture and land-use, the improvement in opportunities for Negroes, and the improvement in churches and religion. On all of the other specific aspects of life checked on, the knowledgeables were somewhat or substantially more favorable.

Despite the general optimism of both groups, there were some aspects of life which were rated favorably by less than half of the respondents. Fewer than half of both knowledgeables and residents saw improvement in county government, local politics and political parties, crime and law enforcement, the physical environment, agriculture and land-use, and churches and religious life. Several other aspects of life were rated favorably by less than half of the residents but by more than half of the knowledgeables. These were the current quality of law enforcement in the county, improvement in job opportunities over the decade, improvement of the real income of wage earners, improvement in recreational opportunities, improvement in opportunities for young people, and improvement in opportunities for old people in the county.

On the whole, the similarities between the knowledgeables' and the ordinary residents' views are more impressive than their differences. Thus a quick survey of knowledgeable people in a county might serve as a partial substitute for a household survey and provide useful information as to how people feel about the quality of life in the area, so long as the level of favorableness is "discounted" somewhat--that is, we can assume that a cross-section sample will be somewhat less favorable but the two groups will not be at opposite poles in their assessments.

The fact that neither group is uniformly favorable, that they do rate some aspects of life unfavorably and that there are fairly consistent differences between the two coal counties and the other two, suggests that subjective indicators have some validity and usefulness and are not just given "off the top of the head."

250-7-75